



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **KEVIN SHELLEY**

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Referendum Proponents May Begin Collecting Signatures in Attempt to Overturn Amendments to Health Care Coverage Requirements

SACRAMENTO --- Secretary of State Kevin Shelley announced Tuesday that the proponents of a proposed referendum measure may begin collecting signatures to require voter approval before a law recently passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor can take effect.

To qualify a referendum for the ballot, the proponents are required by the California Constitution to submit petition signatures of 373,816 registered voters to county election officials within 90 days from the date the bill is chaptered. Senate Bill 2 (Burton, D – San Francisco) was chaptered on October 6, 2003. Proponents have until January 4, 2004 to submit petition signatures.

The Attorney General's official title and summary is as follows:

REFERENDUM PETITION TO OVERTURN AMENMENTS TO HEALTH CARE COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS. If signed by the required number of electors and timely filed with the Secretary of State, this petition will prevent implementation of Chapter 673, Statutes of 2003, previously approved by the Legislature and the Governor, unless and until it is approved by a majority of voters. Measure creates mandatory employee health care benefits program for employers with 20 or more employees. Employees working 100 hours per month are covered. Fee for coverage paid at least 80% by employer and up to 20% by employee contribution. Exempts employers providing alternative coverage.

Once signatures are submitted to county elections officials for verification, the law that the referendum seeks to repeal is stayed from taking effect until either the qualification attempt fails or the issue is addressed by the state's voters.

The proponents of the referendum are Allan Zaremberg, and John Dunlap III. The proponents can be reached at (916) 442-1111

For a copy of the complete text, title & summary, and circulation calendar, please contact the Secretary of State's Press Office at (916) 653-6575.